

## **Community Solar and Wind Request for Proposals**

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **Question #1**

In the RFP, page 4, the Summary Information states: Eligible applicants include municipalities, businesses, non-profit organizations, and public-serving institutions (defined in this RFP as non-profit public and independent schools, universities). Does this include or exclude Places of Worship?

#### **Answer #1**

Places of worship/religious organizations are eligible entities for awards under this RFP.

#### **Question #2**

Does this description of eligible applicants include individuals that contribute to non-profit organizations or Places of Worship, such as Interfaith Organizations?

#### **Answer #2**

Individuals are not eligible applicants.

#### **Question #3**

Please clarify, must the applicant apply for and be denied SSREIP funds for their project as a pre-requisite to this grant program, then demonstrate why funding through this RFP is necessary?

#### **Answer #3**

If the proposed project is eligible to receive an incentive through the Vermont Small-Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program (SSREIP) (see [www.nerc-vt.org/incentives-program/general-information](http://www.nerc-vt.org/incentives-program/general-information)) it is not likely to receive funding through this program. However, if an applicant can clearly and convincingly demonstrate why funding through this RFP, and not the SSREIP, is necessary then the application will be considered and scored together with all other applications.

#### **Question #4**

Regarding matching funds, must all participating recipients of the renewable energy resulting from the project be identified at the time of the Response to the RFP?

#### **Answer #4**

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The RFP states “Applicants will need to submit a letter of commitment identifying the cash match from the source(s) of that funding.” However, if one of the sources will be individual net metering customers and they have not all been identified, and thus letters of commitment can’t be supplied, that is acceptable.

**Question #5**

When is the grant paid?

**Answer #5**

All grants will be paid on a reimbursement basis. As funds are spent by the awardee and invoices and reports are submitted to the Clean Energy Development Fund payments will be made to the awardee.

**Question #6**

Can grant funds be used to create new financing methods for community solar projects?

**Answer #6**

Yes, but such proposals should also include the installation of a PV project.

**Question #7**

How should an applicant that is a school or town reconcile language in the RFP that says on one hand "Preference will be given. . . especially for projects that are able to monetize state and federal tax credits" and on the other hand says "Project benefits community entities such as schools, . . . that are unable to take direct advantage of federal tax incentives...."?

**Answer #7**

This program is designed to encourage cost-effective projects that provide the most benefits for the least investment (owner, beneficiary, and CEDF). In that sense, the CEDF encourages applicants to take advantage of all other incentives (such as federal tax incentives) that are available to them. However, the CEDF also understands that in some circumstances, it is impractical or otherwise infeasible to take advantage of all available incentives. The CEDF is open to applications for such projects, provided a good justification for forgoing certain incentives, and for needing CEDF funding, is provided.

**Question #8**

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If a community were to apply for a set \$ amount, would the application only be considered for the amount on the application, or could the amount awarded be adjusted by the granting authority based on funds available and/or interest in the program?

**Answer #8**

Grant awards, if provided, could be adjusted downward from the requested amount by the CEDF.

**Question #9**

If a community were to apply for and obtain a grant, would the community also have the option of seeking a private investor to potentially sell any tax credits that may exist as-well?

**Answer #9**

An eligible proposal can include the use of private investors that will own the project and make use of any tax credits.

**Question #10**

Will there be additional rounds of Community CEDF RFPs in the future?

**Answer #10**

Currently, there are not any additional community RFPs planed. However, the CEDF is in the process of creating its fiscal year 2015 program plan and community focused RFPs may be part of what gets approved.

**Question #11**

Is a structural analysis of a roof an eligible cost for grant funding?

**Answer #11**

Yes. However, such a proposal should also include the installation of a grid-tied PV and/or wind turbine project to be eligible.

**Question #12**

If it is determined that upgrades to a roof will be needed in order to accommodate the extra load of the solar panels, could these structural upgrades be included in the portion of the project eligible for grant funding cost share?

**Request for Proposals for Distributed Community Solar and Wind Energy Installations****Answer #12**

Yes, the costs to upgrade the roof structure can be included in the total cost of the project and thus could also be eligible for including in the cost share portion of the project.

**Question #13**

The project we are considering would be located on a town owned building, but the balance of the project costs beyond grant funds would be privately financed. Would grant funds go to the town or would they go directly to the entity that is financing the project? In this case should the town be the applicant or the entity financing the project be the applicant?

**Answer #13**

Any grant funds awarded would be paid to the grant applicant. The grant applicant could be the town or the private entity financing the project. In this case it is up to the town and private financiers to decide who would be the applicant and thus the responsible party for the CEDF grant agreement requirements.

**Question #14**

Notifying abutting landowners is part of the CPG process. Without grant funds, the project will not likely happen. Why is it necessary to notify neighbors at this stage when the project is unlikely to go forward without grant funds?

**Answer #14**

Proposals do not have to include this information, but the CEDF's goal is to support projects that have strong community support, including the immediate neighbors of a project. Proposals that include evidence of such support make it easier for the CEDF to meet this goal.

**Question #15**

Could a dashboard to monitor the output of the solar project be included in the budget eligible for grant funds?

**Answer #15**

An applicant could include a dashboard monitor in the total costs and might want to include such as part of an educational or community outreach aspect of a project, but this would not be an eligible item for grant funding.

**Question #16**

**Request for Proposals for Distributed Community Solar and Wind Energy Installations**

I am in the preliminary stages of working with a school supervisory union office to make an application under this RFP. A town in the supervisory union has approved funds by town ballot for improvements to the school including a solar array. It seems to me that the applicant should be the school board or other town body, but in the RFP seems to be written for the installer to be the applicant.

**Answer #16**

The school or the installer can be the applicant under this RFP.

**Question #17**

Since there will almost certainly have to be a bid process to expend town funds, the contractor is not currently known. Any advice on how to proceed would be appreciated.

**Answer #17**

The proposal can list what approvals are in place and what is known about the project at the time of the application. Items not in place or still unknown should be listed and a timeline for securing these details should be included.

**Question #18**

Does a business that hires primarily Vermont employees and manufactures products in Vermont for the Vermont alternate energy industry qualify as an “eligible project” or “community focused enterprise”?

**Answer #18**

A manufacture of renewable energy equipment would be an eligible applicant under this RFP, but a proposal that does not include the installation of a grid-tied PV and/or wind turbine project would not be eligible.

**Question #19**

I want to use Star Wind Turbine LLC Wind turbine. Star Wind Turbines LLC makes a 112 ft.(35m) Tower and an 82 ft.(25m) tower. The 82 ft.(25m) tower was designed specifically for the previous SSREIP (Vermont Small-Scale Renewable Energy Incentive Program), when the requirement was 80ft. min. Since then the requirement has changed to 95ft.(29m). Is it possible on this and future RFPs to revert back to 80ft. min. Perhaps a performance base evaluation over a dimensional specification limitation is more logical.

**Answer #19**

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Proposals that include the installation of Vermont made turbines that do not meet the 29m requirement but are installed on towers of at least 25m are eligible and will be considered.

**Question #20**

Will CEDF be posting the winners and the award amounts of this RFP as well as future and previous RFPs?

**Answer #20**

The CEDF will list on its web site the awards made from this and future RFPs. If there are questions about the awards made in past RFPs please contact the CEDF directly and the CEDF will supply the awardees and grant amounts from past RFPs.

**Question #21**

Like last fall 2013, will you have another RFP this coming fall 2014 for “Small Wind” only? How large might it be?

**Answer #21**

Currently, the CEDF has no plans to issue another RFP limited to distributed wind power.

**Question #22**

If a school district wanted to partner with a private investor and lease the energy system from the investor would this grant program fund such an initiative?

**Answer #22**

Yes, that would be an eligible project.

**Question #23**

I see that the CEDF allows businesses as eligible applicants. Are projects that are owned by businesses eligible?

**Answer #23**

Yes.

**Question #24**

I'm unclear if a privately owned business falls under the definition of a public-serving institution, or community-focused enterprise... or if the business could possibly demonstrate primary benefit to VT communities.

**Request for Proposals for Distributed Community Solar and Wind Energy Installations****Answer #24**

Businesses are listed as eligible applicants. All applications/proposals should demonstrate what makes the project a community project and should list what the benefits to the community are.

**Question #25**

If an applicant obtained a CPG for a project last November, with a deadline of completion of Nov 5, 2014, would the project need to adhere to that, or would it receive a new CPG with a new deadline?

**Answer #25**

The project would have to adhere to the CPG deadline or apply for an extension from the Public Service Board. The CEDF would like the projects completed within 12 months of the execution of the grant agreement. Thus, projects that receive an award would have until late spring/early summer of 2015 to be installed and commissioned.

**Question #26**

As a school, we do not have sufficient cash on hand to cover 50% of the cost of the array we are contemplating (roughly estimated to cost \$250k). We could hold a special bond vote, but not by May 9. We plan to hold a special bond vote this fall to fund a school facility improvement project; we could fold the cost of the array into it. Do you have any guidance in this regard?

**Answer #26**

The proposal should list what approvals are in place and what is known about the project at the time of the application. Items not in place or still unknown should be listed and a timeline for securing these details should be included.

**Question #27**

When do you anticipate announcing the winning projects?

**Answer #27**

Depends on how many proposals are received and the quality of those applications. Review and scoring of the applications could take two or three weeks. The CEDF hopes that before the end of May grant agreements would be sent out and the awards made public. Those applicants that have been chosen to receive awards will hear from the CEDF prior to that.

**Question #28**

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If we are a winning project, but our bond vote fails (in September), what obligation would we have to CEDF?

**Answer #28**

None, other than a written report.

**Question #29**

If an awarded Community Solar and Wind grant covers only 20% of the total cost of the proposed community solar array's initial development, then does the Public Service Department (or some other party it delegates to) acquire the rights to receive 20% of the revenue from the sales of the solar array's Renewable Energy Credits? or 100% of the solar array's REC revenue?

**Answer #29**

No. Any award would be a grant and would not be for purchasing any rights or ownership of the project. However, there will be a condition of all grants from this RFP that projects shall retain and not sell RECs.

**Question #30**

Does the Public Service Department (or other party it delegates to) receive the REC revenue for the life span of the solar array? or just for the first two years that the PSD is monitoring the solar array program as part of the grant's terms and conditions?

**Answer #30**

Neither. If the project receives a grant from the CEDF under this RFP the project will not be allowed to sell RECs. From a project revenue perspective, the CEDF grant is in effect retiring all the RECs of the project. However, any RECs created will be owned by the project owner(s) and could be held or retired by the owner(s). Transferring the RECs to the net metering utility may be an option.

**Question #31**

When does the 12 months deadline for projects to be completed start?

**Answer #31**

The CEDF would like the projects completed within 12 months of the execution of the grant agreement.

**Question #32**



**Request for Proposals for Distributed Community Solar and Wind Energy Installations**

I am from a Town and we are considering bonding for the proposed project that we have been working on with a local company. The selectboard has voted to move ahead with the project. My question is: Your proposal is due May 9, 2014 – this will be really close to get the public hearing in by state Stats to get approval from the Voters to bond. Do we have to have the bond in place and approved before we can apply for this grant.

**Answer #32**

See answer #26.

**Question #33**

If two neighboring towns are considering submitting proposals should both towns team up and submit one application since there is limited money?

**Answer #33**

This is entirely up to the two towns involved. Applicants are encouraged to read the selection criteria and goals of the RFP closely and submit the most competitive proposal possible.

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